BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE

Report of a Public Hearing
on Nuclear Weapons and Disarmament,
Organized by the World Council of Churches

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Report of the Public Hearing on Nuclear Weapons and Disarmament

organized by the World Council of Churches

Amsterdam, November 1981

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WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

Geneva, Switzerland

May, 1982

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FOREWORD

At its meeting August 14-22, 1980, the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches requested its sub-units on Church and Society and the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs "to arrange jointly an international public hearing on the current threat to world peace with special focus on the increased danger of nuclear war, where authoritative witnesses can be cross-examined in an effort to assess the present situation".

In consultation with the General Secretary and the Executive Committee of the World Council of Churches, the two sub-units began preparations for the Hearing which was held in the Free University, Amsterdam, November 23-27, 1981. Great care was taken to invite an ecumenically representative Hearing Group of church leaders and lay persons concerned with these issues. In addition, there were 38 expert witnesses who gave their views to the Hearing Group during the days of its meeting. Background papers presented the opinion of various groups and individuals and also past statements by the World Council of Churches.

The Hearing Group issued a "preliminary report" at the close of its sessions in Amsterdam which served as the starting point for the fuller report published here. I commend it to the WCC member churches and to all interested persons. It deserves careful attention and study in the churches, especially in view of the widespread public discussion of these questions. The complete record of the Hearing including the statements of all witnesses and the questioning of these will be published in July, 1982.

I wish to thank the members of the Hearing Group and especially the Moderator, Bishop John Habgood, for the time and care they have given to this assignment and for the thorough way in which the Hearing was conducted. While the report represents only the views of the Hearing Group, their thoughtful statements provide a valuable basis for the further discussion on these issues in preparation for the forthcoming Assembly of the WCC, to be held in Vancouver, Canada, July 1983.

This report is offered in the spirit of the call of Christ in the Beatitude : "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God".

Philip Potter
General Secretary of the WCC

May 10, 1982

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FOREWORD

BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE

Report of the Public Hearing on Nuclear Weapons and Disarmament

At its meeting August 7-9, 1981, the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches requested its Commission on Church and Society and the Commission on the Churches on International Affairs "to arrange jointly an international public hearing on the current threat to world peace with special focus on the increased danger of nuclear war, where authoritative witnesses can be cross-examined in an effort to assess the present situation".

In consultation with the General Secretary and the Executive Committee of the World Council of Churches, the necessary arrangements began for the Hearing which was held in the Free University, Amsterdam, November 24-27, 1981. Great care was taken to invite an ecumenically representative Hearing Group of church leaders and lay persons concerned with these issues. In addition, there were 18 expert witnesses who gave their views to the Hearing Group during the days of its meeting. Background papers presented the opinion of various groups and individuals and also past statements by the World Council of Churches.

The Hearing Group issued a "preliminary report" at the close of its session in Amsterdam, which was used as the starting point for the fuller report published here. I commend it to the WCC, member churches and to all interested persons. It covers crucial aspects of a matter of urgent importance, especially in view of the international public discussion of these questions. The substantive record of the Hearing including the statements of the witnesses and the texts of the papers will be published in late 1982.

I wish to thank the members of the Hearing Group and especially the Moderator, Bishop John Elbourne, for their care and care they have given to this assignment and for the thoughtful way in which the Hearing was conducted. Under the very capable guidance of the Hearing Group, the witnesses provided a valuable basis for the further discussion on these issues in preparation for the forthcoming assembly of the WCC, to be held in Vancouver, Canada, July 1983.

This report is offered in the spirit of the call of Christ in the Beatitudes: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God".

Geneva, July 1982

Emilio Castro
General Secretary of the WCC

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LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

May 3, 1982

Dear Dr. Potter,

The International Public Hearing on Nuclear Weapons and Disarmament, held in Amsterdam in November 1981, took place at the request of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches. As Moderator of the Hearing I now present our Report, through you, to the Central Committee, in the hope that it will assist in the formation of worldwide Christian opinion on these momentous subjects, and enable churches, both individually and through the Council, to play a more effective part in the quest for world security, peace and justice.

This Report contains the record of the Hearing itself, slightly edited to avoid repetition (to be available in July), together with the reflections of the Hearing Panel on the evidence presented to it, and its advice to the churches (presented herewith).

We met at a perilous moment in world history. We were conscious of the historic concern of the World Council of Churches with these matters, and the many statements made on them since the first meeting of the Assembly in Amsterdam 1948. We were also made aware of the strength of popular feeling, now finding expression in many parts of the world, not least in Amsterdam itself. Our task was, however, not to prejudge the issues, nor simply to rehearse the horrors of nuclear war, but to receive and evaluate a wide variety of points of view.

We were fortunate in securing witnesses of the highest calibre and conviction. The possible slaughter of hundreds of millions of human beings, the possible devastation of a precious part of God's creation, are matters which inevitably arouse intense emotion. But the discussion of how the world can best avoid these perils, must include detailed attention to the facts, the weighing of probabilities, and a willingness to wrestle with the dilemmas actually faced by world leaders. The service we hope we have rendered to the churches is in providing material of this detailed kind.

Our own reflections have led us to believe that a clear moral judgement can and should be made about the sinfulness of nuclear weapons. To say this does not solve any political problems, and we recognize that the world may have to go on living with such weapons for some time to come. To admit moral evil, however, is a first step towards liberation from the dangerous assumption that world security can be brought by the continuance of present policies, and by the never-ending escalation of arms.

As an international Hearing we attempted to put this particular issue of nuclear weapons in its broadest context. We were reminded again and again that in our present world there can be no long-term security for any without security for all, and no real peace without justice. These are familiar themes within the World Council of Churches. Our Report will, we hope, give them an added sense of urgency.

We have entitled our Report, *Before It's Too Late*, because the urgency of the matters was borne in upon us as the Hearing progressed. Far-reaching decisions about security and about nuclear weapons development are being taken, not only by the present nuclear powers, but by other nations as well. Delay in acting to stop the multiplication and spread of these weapons only increases the dangers. We hope you can persuade the churches to face these issues as a top priority.

The Hearing Group expresses its appreciation to the Free University of Amsterdam, especially to its Rector, Dr. H. Verheul, and to the University Board for the use of its well-equipped Aula and other facilities during the days of the Hearing. We are also grateful to Prof. D.C. Mulder and the members of the local preparatory committee which he chaired, for their help in making many practical arrangements and to the group of theological students from the University of Leiden and the Free University who served as stewards during the Hearing.

Finally, I would like to thank all those who participated in the Hearing, both as members of the Panel and as expert witnesses. In particular I wish to pay tribute to Paul Abrecht and Ninan Koshy who were mainly responsible for organizing it, as well as to other members of the World Council of Churches staff without whose unseen work and practised efficiency such an event could not have taken place.

John Habgood
Bishop of Durham

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

May 3, 1983

Dear Dr. Ryan:

The International Public Hearing on Nuclear Weapons and Disarmament held in Amsterdam in November 1981, took place at the request of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches. As Moderator of the Hearing I now present our Report, through you, to the Central Committee. In the hope that it will assist in the formation of worldwide Christian opinion on these controversial subjects and analyze alternatives, both individually and through the Council, to play a more effective part in the quest for world security, peace and justice.

This Report contains the record of the Hearing itself, slightly edited to avoid repetition (to be available in July) together with the recommendations of the Hearing Panel on the questions presented to it, and its advice to the Committee (presented herewith).

We met at a critical moment in world history. We were concerned at the bitterness between the World Council of Churches with these matters, and the injury sustained early on during the first meeting of the Assembly in Amsterdam 1948. We were also made aware of the growing of popular feeling, now finding expression in many parts of the world, not least in Australia itself. Our task was, however, not to prejudge the issues, nor simply to rehearse the history of conflict, but to receive and evaluate a wide variety of points of view.

We were fortunate in securing witnesses of the highest calibre and conviction. The possible elimination of a number of millions of human beings, the possible destruction of a precious part of God's creation, are matters which inevitably arouse intense concern. In the discussion of how the world can best avoid these perils, many speakers directed attention to the facts, the weighing of probabilities, and a realistic appraisal of means with the alliance accordingly based on world realities. The services we have we have rendered in the consideration and testimony of this detailed kind.

Our own reflections have led us to believe that a clear moral judgment can and should be made about the existence of nuclear weapons. To say this does not solve any political problems, and we recognize that the world only have ways to live with such weapons for some time to come. To admit moral evil, however, is a first step towards liberation from the dangers of the world's existing arsenals by the continuance of present policies, and by the ever-mounting accumulation of arms.

As an international Hearing we attempted to put this particular issue of nuclear weapons in its broad context. We were reminded, and again claim that in our present world there can be no long-term security for any nation or for all, and no real peace without justice. These are familiar themes within the World Council of Churches. Our Report will, we hope, give them an added sense of urgency.

We have emitted our Report before its time. Because the urgency of the matters we have to speak on is upon us, a Hearing participant recently declared some aspects and about nuclear weapons development are being taken not only by the present nuclear powers, but by other nations as well. Delay in acting to stop the multiplication and spread of these weapons only increases the danger. We hope our contribution can persuade the churches to see these issues as a top priority.

The Hearing Group expresses its appreciation to the Free University of Amsterdam, especially to its Rector, Dr. H. Verhoef, and the Theological Faculty for the use of its well-equipped Aula and other facilities during the days of the Hearing. We are also grateful to Prof. D.C. Mulder and the members of the local preparatory committee which had planned for their help in making study preparation arrangements and in the provision of theological students from the University of Leiden and the Free University, who served so effectively during the Hearing.

Finally, I would like to thank all those who participated in the Hearing, both as members of the Panel and as experts or witnesses. In particular I wish to pay tribute to Prof. Abmann and Marian Kozby who were unable, despite their illness, to be present during it, as well as to other members of the World Council of Churches staff without whose patience, work and practical effectiveness such an event could not have taken place.

Sincerely,

Adam Trionfo
Moderator of Hearing

BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE

Report of the WCC Public Hearing on Nuclear Weapons and Disarmament

I. INTRODUCTION

In August 1980, the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches requested the WCC sub-unit on Church and Society and the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs "to arrange jointly an international Public Hearing on the current threat to world peace with special focus on the increased danger of nuclear war, where authoritative witnesses can be cross-examined in an effort to assess the present situation".

In view of the ongoing WCC programmes on (A) disarmament and against militarism and the arms race, and (B) the role of science and technology in the work for peace, the planners decided to focus the Hearing on the issues of Nuclear Weapons and Disarmament, and to hold the Hearing in November, 1981. These decisions were approved by the Executive Committee of the WCC in February 1981 and reported to the Central Committee in July 1981.

More than 500 copies of a *Prospectus* in English, French and German outlining the purpose and scope of the Hearing, were circulated for comment to church leaders, theologians, representatives of governmental and inter-governmental organizations, to those involved in peace movements and to a wide range of experts in nuclear weapons development, strategy and disarmament.

In June 1981, a Planning Committee met in Holland to make preparations for the Hearing. It (1) examined the replies to the Prospectus and agreed on the subject areas for the Hearing; (2) proposed a Hearing Panel of 18 persons to conduct the Hearing, selected according to regional and confessional interests; (3) began the process of selecting witnesses for the Hearing in the subject areas; (4) advised the staff concerning preparation of the necessary background material, and (5) decided to hold the Hearing in Amsterdam.

This process of preparation coincided with a great wave of popular activity for nuclear disarmament in Europe which both added to the significance of the Hearing and at the same time accentuated the sharp divisions in the churches on this issue.

Eventually 38 witnesses, representing a wide variety of theological, political, scientific and military backgrounds and including leaders of popular peace and public interests movements, appeared before the Hearing Group of 17 members. There were in addition over 350 observers from churches and from governmental and non-governmental organizations.

The meeting was conducted in English with simultaneous translation into French, German and Russian.

COMPELLING REASONS FOR THE HEARING

A number of factors suggested that this was an opportune moment to hold such a Hearing, not least the awareness that decisions are being taken which will have immense impact on the prospects for world peace and security. These factors include:

1. The development, improvement and deployment by the major nuclear powers of nuclear weapons systems including the neutron bomb, the cruise missile and a new generation of small and more accurate nuclear missiles such as the SS-20's and the Pershing-II's, new nuclear submarines like the Trident system. All these have implications for traditional theories of peace through nuclear deterrence.
2. Increasing public alarm about the strategy of flexible response, i.e. the limited use of small tactical nuclear weapons, and counterforce strategies involving the idea of a first strike. Such strategies assume the possibility of nuclear war fighting, and have led to fears, especially in Western countries, that a nuclear war is almost inevitable.
3. Disappointment with the results of bilateral and multilateral negotiations such as the apparent failure of the Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference in 1980, the failure to ratify the SALT II negotiations and to include certain key elements in disarmament negotiations, e.g. the national nuclear deterrent forces of the smaller nuclear powers especially in the European theatre. This has led to an expressed need for new approaches to disarmament.
4. The sharpening of political and ideological conflicts all over the world, creating on atmosphere in which the struggle for arms control and disarmament has become much more difficult.
5. The spread of nuclear technology, a potential source of nuclear weapons, and the constant increase in the number of nuclear or "near" nuclear-weapons states, coupled with the failure, mentioned above, of the NPT Review Conference to limit incentives to proliferation.
6. The need to draw attention to the role of vested economic and industrial interests in maintaining the arms race.
7. The growing concern for world economic and social justice, now seen as threatened by the constant increase of expenditure on the arms race and the waste and destruction of natural resources.

In planning for the Hearing it was recognized that the question of nuclear arms and their proliferation could not be treated in isolation from the continuing world struggle for political and economic justice. Until the injustices which give rise to international conflict are removed, until economic and technological power is more fairly distributed between the nations, there will be tension and confrontation. But nuclear war would wipe out all possibilities of achieving any just and responsible society. The concern for its prevention is therefore a legitimate point of entry into the struggle for a new and more just world order.

REASONS FOR THE CHURCHES' CONCERN

The churches cannot be passive witnesses to the steady deterioration of the prospects for world peace. In the past some have expressed their concerns and have contributed their ideas for meeting the challenge. But in the light of the new developments fresh thinking and commitment is called for. The political and social impact of these developments requires the churches to rethink, not only their theological and ethical approaches, but also their commitment to appropriate and effective strategies in response to them. In preparing for the Hearing it was noted that the churches have already expressed :

- Their commitment to world peace based on justice.
- A shared belief that, whatever justification there may be for use of military force in national defence or opposition to tyranny, nuclear war presents an unprecedented threat to the survival and well-being of millions of people.
- Their concern that the majority of the world's people and nations, though threatened, have no voice in the determination of policies.
- Their concern that vast resources, both of wealth and scientific effort, are being diverted from basic human needs to armaments.
- An increasing awareness that there is "no technical solution" to the dilemma of increasing armaments and increasing insecurity.
- Their desire to participate more effectively in the struggle against militarism.

In the light of the above considerations it was decided that the Hearing should have three fundamental aims :

1. To assess the problems posed by the escalation of the nuclear arms race and the concepts of deterrence and limited nuclear war; and to examine the stalemate in efforts for nuclear disarmament and its causes;
2. to help in the development of Christian thinking on some of the major issues;
3. to search for ways in which churches, Christian groups and others can help promote a climate of thinking more favourable to nuclear disarmament and for practical ways by which they can most effectively contribute to it.

At the end of the Hearing the Group issued a "Preliminary Report" outlining in a very brief and general way some of its findings and indicated that this fuller final report would be forthcoming.

II. CRITICAL PROBLEMS

A. THE CHOICES BEFORE US : A BALANCE OF TERROR OR... ?

The world has "lived with the bomb" for 37 years and for 37 years East and West have managed to avoid a major nuclear confrontation. This is the basis of the claim that "deterrence works". Deterrence, whether by the threat of massive retaliation, or by ensuring that an enemy's war aims cannot be fulfilled, has always been an element in peace-keeping. Defenders of nuclear deterrence argue that by raising the stakes to a totally unacceptable degree, the world has in fact been made more secure, precisely because the balance of terror is so horrifying.

The picture is not a static one, however. If it were, the argument might be more plausible. It is no accident that public concern has fastened on the arms race as the main symbol of all that is dangerous and wrong with present military policies. Part of this concern focusses on the economic and social cost of arms escalation, both to the countries concerned and to the rest of the world. This point will be considered in more detail later. Our concern in this section is with the destabilizing effect of constant escalation, an effect so great as to throw serious doubt on the long-term viability of the whole strategy of nuclear deterrence.

1. ESCALATION OF THE ARMS RACE

Escalation has two aspects, the multiplication of weapons, and the development of new types of weapons. On the first, all that needs to be said is that the number of nuclear weapons now possessed by the nuclear powers exceeds by many times the number needed to destroy all human life on earth.

> "The exact number of nuclear warheads in the world today is probably not known by any single person or institution, and estimates cannot be verified officially. Published figures indicate, however, that the total may be in excess of 40,000. In explosive power these warheads are reported to range from about 100 tons up to more than 20 million tons equivalent of chemical explosive. The largest weapon ever tested released an energy approximately 4,000 times that of the atomic bomb that levelled Hiroshima, and there is in principle no upper limit to the explosive yield that may be attained. The total strength of present nuclear arsenals may be equivalent to about one million Hiroshima bombs, i.e., some 13,000 million tons of TNT. It is often pointed out that this is equivalent to more than 3 tons for every man, woman and child on the earth. The arsenals of the United States and the Soviet Union contain most of these weapons, with the known remainder belonging to China, France and the United Kingdom." (*Comprehensive Study of Nuclear Weapons*, Report of the Secretary General, United Nations, New York, 1981, p. 5.)

This race to multiply weapons is fuelled by the desire to negotiate from strength, by pursuit of the unattainable goal of nuclear parity, and by technical developments which have made it possible for a major proportion of a nation's nuclear armory to be destroyed by an opponent before it ever leaves the ground. Each of the major powers therefore seeks a large margin of "safety".

Technical escalation, though less obvious in terms of sheer weight of armour, poses greater problems in terms of the basic strategy of deterrence. Modern weapons are on the whole smaller, many times more accurate, and harder to detect or intercept, than an earlier generation of nuclear missiles which created the policy of Assured Destruction, popularly known as Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD). The main developments have been partly in the warheads themselves, through the scaling down of their size, but mainly in the increasing sophistication of the delivery systems, i.e. in the rockets and control systems and in the multiplication of warheads (MIRVing). The result is that a single missile with multiple warheads can now be fired between the continents with a fair expectation that some at least will fall within a few hundred metres of their targets.

The vast panoply of different missiles, with different ranges, different destructive powers and different types of launching sites, has created a correspondingly vast range of different possibilities for their use. The so-called "nuclear deterrent" is now a highly sophisticated and complex set of options, posing a wide variety of threats to an opponent, subject to constant change, and tending to encourage detailed planning about the way the options could be used in actual fighting.

We shall consider below some of the tensions within deterrence theory itself, and the far-reaching changes caused by the development of small, short-range missiles, the so-called tactical nuclear force, which, it is claimed, could be used for limited purposes, confined to a particular battlefield. We turn now to the broader issue, whether further progress along the road of constant qualitative and quantitative increases can ever create and maintain the security which is its ultimate aim.

2. SECURITY

World security is indivisible. There can be no security for any unless there is security for all. As Mr. Olof Palme (former Prime Minister of Sweden) said to us :

> "National security cannot be achieved by policies that lead to international insecurity. For if the world as a whole is insecure, the individual nations cannot be secure. Security is a common responsibility : one nation's security cannot be achieved at the expense of other nations. It must be achieved together, with the prospective adversary — not against him. Security must be sought in cooperation — regionally and globally — instead of in rivalry and search for military superiority. These are imperatives of the nuclear age."

A world in which two major powers are using a high proportion of their energies to outwit one another technologically, and to gain political advantages through their relationships with other nations, is bound to be dangerous. When the dice are loaded against any radical change or readjustment in the world political

scene because the *status quo* is backed up by the threat of holocaust, then the long-term prospects of an eventual explosive breakdown are great. The inextricable mixture of military, political and economic factors, and the extreme difficulty of trying to adjust the balance of power in any or all of these areas, encourages many to accept the *status quo* in sheer bewilderment. But the apparent stability is an illusion.

We do not accept that the arms race is unstoppable and that further escalation with all its military, political and economic consequences is inevitable, though we fully acknowledge the extreme difficulty, indeed the element of danger, in attempting to reverse present policies. The fact is that escalation is itself dangerous. Not only is the process inherently unstable, not only is it unjust towards the non-nuclear nations, but it also negates the very security it seeks to achieve.

Meanwhile we note that even stopping the nuclear arms race would only solve part of the problem. It would have to be followed up with resolute steps towards general disarmament and effective political measures for ensuring security for all.

3. DETERRENCE AND COUNTERFORCE — STRAINS AND CONTRADICTIONS

The Hearing provided ample evidence of the strains and contradictions now apparent within the overall concept of nuclear deterrence. Even witnesses who were prepared to defend strategies of deterrence on pragmatic grounds implied that it might have been better if nuclear weapons had never been invented. Yet,

> "We have entered the nuclear age and cannot get back out of it... There is no escape from the doors of knowledge through which, wisely or unwisely, the human race is going." (Prof. McGeorge Bundy, Special Assistant for National Security Affairs, The White House, 1961 - 1966)

The basic paradox, that there must be a conditional intention to unleash mind-boggling destructive power in the name of peace and security, is well known, and its implications were presented very sharply by a witness from the USSR :

> "It is sometimes said that nuclear deterrence is good until the war starts... Mutual Assured Destruction is good as long as deterrence works. What would happen if deterrence fails? Will the strategy be good after that? Nobody can know..." (Dr. Alexei Arbatov, Chief Researcher, Institute of World Economy and International Relations, Academy of Sciences, USSR)

The questions haunt even the staunchest advocates of the theory of deterrence, and are inescapable. However, it is the new elements of ambiguity, resulting from new weapons and new strategies for their use, which concern us most in this section.

a. Are Nuclear Weapons Usable ?

The first problem we wish to highlight concerns the extent to which the development of weapons, whose use is more credible in military terms than that of huge intercontinental ballistic missiles, is politically destabilizing. Is there, in other words, an inherent relationship between the development of more usable weapons, and the likelihood that they will actually be used?

Opinions differ on whether in the first phase of nuclear weapons' development the relative stability of the period depended more on a favourable political climate, or on the ability of each side to devastate the other (Mutual Assured Destruction). Such stability as may have been provided by this capability, however, soon proved to be illusory. A deterrent so huge and so remote could in the long run only provide security against nuclear attack itself, and ceased to have much value as a day-to-day instrument of political power.

The gradual shift towards other strategies entailing the use of a graded series of weapons in a wide variety of contexts (the doctrine of flexible response) was made possible by the development of successive generations of short-range low-yield weapons. It is argued that this attempt to restore military credibility, however, has made the political tensions worse. There is no way of escaping the dilemma that enhanced credibility enhances the threat to an opponent. This is true of any weapon.

There is a further point to be borne in mind in the case of nuclear weapons. At present some safeguard against their use is provided by the existence of the so-called nuclear threshold — the psychological barrier against allowing a conventional war to escalate towards a first use of nuclear weapons, with all the unknown consequences that might entail. The smaller the weapons, and the more they are integrated within a conventional armory, the greater the danger. The real possibility that the threshold might be crossed, for reasons connected only with a particular battlefield, and might lead to uncontrollable nuclear escalation, poses special problems in the control of such weapons, and creates a high degree of insecurity.

b. Limited Nuclear War

The second problem follows directly from this. We were faced with divergent views about the likelihood of a localized nuclear exchange developing into an all-out nuclear war. In answer to the question, "Could a limited nuclear war be contained?" some witnesses argued that the uncertainty increases the effectiveness of the deterrent, indeed that uncertainty is an essential element in deterrence. Others stated that to accept the possibility of fighting a limited nuclear war increases the risk that it will happen, and that, once started, control over it would almost certainly be lost.

The weight of the evidence convinces us that the risks are too great, and that there is no moral justification for believing that a limited nuclear war could remain limited. We believe that if the policies of the super-powers continue to move in the same direction as at present, the nuclear threshold will continue to be eroded and the temptation to use a nuclear weapon will eventually prove overwhelming. We conclude that any gains in weapons credibility are far outweighed by the risks involved in planning for limited nuclear war, and we urge that the dangers be recognized before it is too late. We are conscious too of the fragility of human beings as decision-makers under heavy pressure, as for instance when there is felt to be no alternative to nuclear war. In such cases the temptation to escalate could become irresistible. Even a limited nuclear war, if such were possible, would be an unmitigated evil, and we regard as unacceptable, strategies which presuppose even the most limited possibility of nuclear war-fighting.

c. Implications of First Strike

A third problem derives from the greatly increased accuracy of nuclear missiles, which can now pose an unanswerable threat to military installations, and hence have increased the military advantages of a first strike, with a consequent loss in stability. The use of weapons primarily against military targets might seem more justifiable than the use of weapons of mass destruction. This raises the question whether the development of counterforce strategies is to be regarded simply as a refinement of deterrence rather than a contradiction of it. We urge governments and military planners to be sensitive to the dangers of developing weapons which are likely to be seen as particularly aggressive and threatening by an opponent.

There are particular dangers — moral, political and strategic —

in policies which depend on a possible first use of nuclear weapons. The dilemma of the NATO powers is well known, and it is believed by many that much would be gained in terms of European stability if NATO were to be less dependent on nuclear weapons, and a better balance of conventional forces were to be achieved at a lower level.

Discussion of nuclear deterrence inevitably concentrates on the confrontation between East and West, with its focus in Europe. However the same principles, and the same dangers, are equally relevant wherever nations threaten one another with such weapons. Though the particular concerns of Europe may seem remote from the urgent problems facing many other parts of the world, our hope is that an easing of tension in Europe and a lessening in the degree of confrontation between the major powers may create a context in which these other equally urgent problems can be tackled more resolutely.

B. DRIVING FORCES IN THE ARMS RACE

The Hearing Group gave much attention to the discussion of the threats implicit in the development and introduction of new nuclear weapons systems. A number of witnesses with long experience in military planning, research and development testified and responded to questions. There seem to be four major centres of decision-making in the development of new weapons systems : the political, the military, the industrial, and the scientific-technological.

In most of the present nuclear nations it is clear that the final decision is a political one. What is much more difficult to disentangle is the influence of the other centres at various points between an initial concept and a decision to deploy. There are also considerable differences between major powers, the industries competing for contracts from the military in the capitalistic countries, and the military competing for the options offered by the government controlled industries in the socialist ones.

We were impressed by a number of points relating especially to the role of science and technology as driving forces in the nuclear arms race which we discuss further below.

1. THE MOMENTUM OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

The pressure of technological innovation is a large factor in the introduction of new nuclear weapons systems by the present nuclear weapons nations (vertical proliferation) and efforts of non-nuclear nations to obtain them (horizontal proliferation). As one of the expert witnesses said to us :

> "Pursuit of military technology appears to have taken on a life of its own. The major resources in money and human talent devoted to military Research and Development have resulted in an intense competition to achieve equality and/or superiority in military technology. The leading actors in the competition generally pursue short-term military objectives, setting aside the long-term implications of their efforts. Each side tends to behave as though there were only one "show" and to blind itself to the reactions of its potential adversary, who is very likely even to be pursuing the same technology. This failure to consider the consequences of new technological initiatives occurs all too often in the flush of enthusiasm about new technologies, be they military or civil. This is what happened in the development of Multiple Independent Reentry Vehicles (MIRVs). The enthusiasm about the military utility of this weapon overshadowed its rather obvious long-term destabilizing effects on the nuclear arms competition and on nuclear stability." (Prof. Jack Ruina, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, USA)

The momentum is increased by the fact that all the centres of decision-making assume the worst : that their opponent could gain an advantage through a new technological development, and as a consequence they themselves must go ahead. Moreover, the fear of technological surprise makes many political and military decision-makers concerned about falling behind in weapons development. There are even cases where the scientific-technological experts have been asked to develop systems in response to the fear of surprise technological developments which they themselves had said wouldn't work.

2. THE INFLUENCE OF SCIENTISTS AND TECHNOLOGISTS

However subservient their role in actual decision-making, scientists and technologists have played an essential part in envisaging new possibilities and pursuing science and technologies whose primary aim is to serve the development of new weapons and other military systems. For example, it was the needs of the military which gave the biggest impetus to the development of computer technology and data processing. The same is true for advances in many other branches of science and technology which we think of as primarily "civilian" such as aviation and materials science.

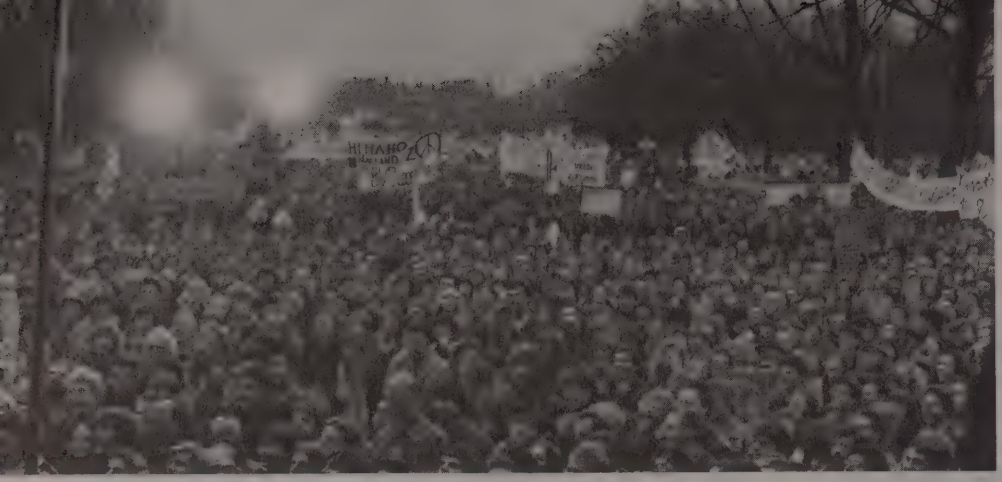
As initiators and expert advisers they have a critical role in resisting pressure from special interest groups and in providing accurate information to military and political leaders. They have similar responsibility for providing information to the general public, though the way in which this latter responsibility can be fulfilled depends upon political circumstances.

There have been instances of scientists and technologists who have helped public understanding by providing information on the deleterious political-economic consequences and implications of certain types of weapons research and development. Some have terminated their involvement in military related programmes on grounds of conscience. However, because it is not easy to define the chain of responsibility, many of the scientists, technologists, strategists and politicians appearing before us gave the impression of being trapped by the system. As a result there is often a fatalistic belief (shared also by the public), that there is no way out, and that the best we can do is to go along with the never-ending spiral of further development and deployment. This highlights the importance of an organized response by professional bodies representing scientists and engineers in consultation with political and social scientists.

3. SECRECY AS RESTRAINT ON PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Each major nuclear power is afraid of technological surprises from others, but each seeks by every possible means to surprise its opponents. This process demands secrecy. Each side is reluctant to divulge to others (and to its own public) the latest plans, especially when they are still in the research and development stage. By the time the public announcement is made the new system has already passed the research and development stage and is ready for production and deployment. We questioned various witnesses about the possibility of removing some of the excessive secrecy about weapons development bearing in mind some of the fears which it generates.

Science has developed in the past through open discussion. Military science by espousing secrecy violates this principle. It also puts the public at a disadvantage in arriving at responsible



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Scenes from the WCC International Hearing on Nuclear Weapons and Disarmament, Amsterdam, November 1981

1. The Dutch Protest against Nuclear Weapons : The Manifestation in Amsterdam.
2. Dr. Olof Palme, former Prime Minister of Sweden, addresses the Hearing.
3. Rev. William Sloane Coffin, Jr., senior pastor of Riverside Church, New York City, speaking at the ecumenical service in the Thomaskerk, Amsterdam. Church leaders from Holland, the GDR, USSR and Pacific Islands also took part in the service.
4. The Hearing in open session receives the views of Academician Prof. A.A. Bayev from USSR (left).
5. Members of the Hearing Group : Dr. Justice Helmut Simon, FRG; Pastor Jacques Maury, France; General T.B. Simatupang, Indonesia; Russian interpreter and Archbishop Kiril, USSR; Prof. Yusif A. Sayigh, Lebanon.
6. The Moderator of the Hearing, the Rt. Rev. John Habgood, Bishop of Durham, U.K. (centre) and the organizing secretaries : Dr. Paul Abrecht (left) and Mr. Ninan Koshy (right).
7. A witness, Dr. Everett Mendelsohn, Harvard University, USA, is interviewed by Dutch television.
8. Members of the Hearing Group : front, l. to r. : Dr. Alan Geyer, USA; Ambassador Olle Dahlén, Sweden; Mrs. Suliana Siwatibau, Fiji; and Prof. Vera Kistiakowsky, USA; rear : Mr. David MacDonald, Canada; Russian interpreter and Archbishop Kiril, USSR.
9. Dr. Max von der Stoel, Dutch Foreign Minister, welcomes the Hearing.
10. General Simatupang, Indonesia, and Miss Gwendoline Konie, Zambia, also served on the Hearing Group.
11. Four witnesses debate deterrence and limited nuclear war, l. to r. : General Brent Scowcroft, USA; Dr. K.-Peter Stratmann, FRG; Dr. Anders Boserup, Denmark; Dr. Alexei Arbatov, USSR.
12. Three witnesses from the USA, l. to r. : Prof. McGeorge Bundy, Prof. Jack Ruina and Prof. George Rathjens.
13. Bishop Paulos Gregorios, member of the Hearing Panel, converses with Prof. Burgess Carr of Liberia, a theologian witness.

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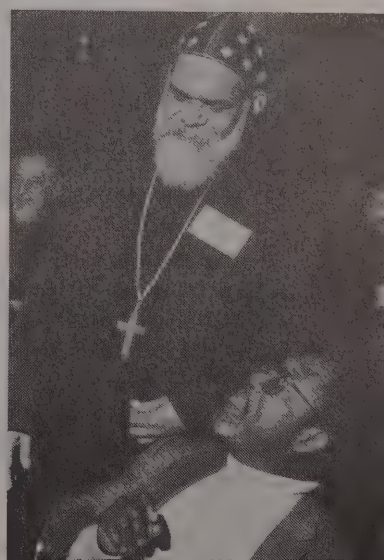

decisions. International governmental organizations complain about the unwillingness of the big nuclear-weapon states to provide information that would enable the public to discharge its responsibility in decision-making. The U.N.'s Group of Experts charged with assembling "a new report on all aspects of nuclear weapons in order to provide accurate and authoritative information to as wide a public as possible" noted, "with regret and concern, that the nuclear-weapon states, and in particular the two super-powers, have withheld their participation in the work of the Group of Experts" (*Comprehensive Study on Nuclear Weapons,* p. 4). The people have a right to know, because it is their lives that are imperilled by these decisions. Any projected system of international security has to include effective measures (e.g. a U.N. satellite) for acquiring and disseminating accurate information on worldwide developments in military technology.

4. ECONOMIC INTERESTS — THE MILITARY-INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX

In many situations economic groups pursuing profit (through private or public corporations engaged in arms research, development and production) have a big stake in the continuation of the arms race. They inevitably develop close ties with the military, and together they operate powerful lobbies which often deflect political and social judgements based on wider considerations. This is especially so in times of economic recession and unemployment when a Government can argue that the arms industry produces economic advantages for its country. However, recent studies have shown that investment in non-military economic activity can produce more jobs than military related industry.

It is clear that it will take a vigilant and informed public to overcome this kind of influence and to chart alternative courses based on the long-term interests of the world community.

5. POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS

The forces driving arms development and production seem immensely tangled. Nevertheless there are signs of hope.

a. Many scientists and technologists are willing to help the public understand complex technical details and make responsible decisions. They should be encouraged in this direction.
b. The influence of special economic and political interests in maintaining programmes of arms research and development is being exposed and challenged. Economic constraints are beginning to make their presence felt.
c. Scientific and technological communities in different countries are beginning to become aware of the ethical implications of their military-related work. They need to be made to understand the implications and possible consequences of the arms race and their personal responsibility to society. Some members of the international scientific community are already engaged in actions to mobilize the public and to counteract pressures for continuing the arms race.

6. WIDER IMPLICATIONS

It is however essential to be realistic about the implications and complexities of the situation. The present spiral of the arms race is perhaps the most obvious manifestation of a scientific and technological culture seemingly out of control. The ultimate nightmare, as expressed by one outstanding nuclear scientist with long experience in weapons development, is that "the power to decide whether or not doomsday has arrived is in the process of passing from statesmen and politicians to lower-level officers and technicians and, eventually, to machines..." (Dr. Herbert York, *The Race to Oblivion*, 1971). The moral and spiritual dynamics of the modern scientific and technological culture threaten to overthrow humanity and place non-human forces at the helm of human affairs. The issues raised take us beyond the immediate concern of the Hearing but we draw attention to them as subjects for urgent further study by the WCC.

C. NEGOTIATIONS FOR ARMS CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT — THE PROSPECTS

In the last two decades, various bilateral and multilateral negotiations have produced a whole series of agreements and treaties aimed at controlling the arms race between the nuclear powers and limiting the spread of nuclear weapons in general.

The Hearing Group received numerous background papers and statements from witnesses on the history and development of these negotiations, the substance of the treaties, and judgements and evaluations, pro and contra, of the actual achievements of the negotiating process.

Some of the agreements and treaties made since the end of the Second World War to control the production, deployment and use of nuclear weapons, are purely bilateral between the USA and the USSR; some are multilateral involving all the nuclear nations, and others include most nations. We list here some of the most important ones in chronological order :

The Antarctic Treaty (1959)

This includes provisions for excluding the use, production or deployment of nuclear weapons or wastes from Antarctic territory. The Treaty was signed in December 1959 and has been in force since June 23, 1961. As of December 1980, 31 states had ratified the Treaty.

Partial Test Ban Treaty (1963)

The signatories agree to ban all nuclear test explosions in the atmosphere, in space and under water. The USA, the USSR and the U.K. are signatories, but two nuclear powers, China and France did not sign and have continued testing of new nuclear weapons in these spheres. The Treaty does not ban underground tests, which allows the major nuclear powers to continue the development of new weapons. The Treaty was signed on August 5, 1963 and has been in force since October 10 of the same year. As of December 1980, 112 states have ratified it.

Outer Space Treaty (1967)

This Treaty bans the deployment of weapons of mass destruction in outer space, and declares that celestial bodies (like the moon) are to be used exclusively for peaceful purposes. A drawback is that the Treaty permits ballistic missiles carrying nuclear weapons to pass through this region on their way to their targets. In addition, weapons which are not capable of mass destruction are allowed to be deployed in this region. The Treaty was signed on January 27, 1967, and has been in force since October 10 of the same year. As of December 31, 1980, 82 states had ratified it.

Treaty of Tlatelolco (1967)

This is the first international Treaty declaring a particular geographical region to be a nuclear-weapon-free zone for all countries within that zone and forbidding the deployment of such weapons in the zone by external powers. Unfortunately, Brazil and Argentina — the only two major powers of Latin America capable of producing nuclear weapons — have not signed the Treaty. It was signed on February 14, 1967, and entered into force on April 22, 1968. There were 22 parties to it as of December 31, 1980.

Non-Proliferation Treaty (1970)

This is a complex Treaty attempting to limit the proliferation of nuclear weapons by placing restrictions on the transfer of nuclear weapons and nuclear technology between nations, while encouraging the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The Treaty is being eroded because of the inconsistent policies of the nuclear suppliers as well as the failure of the negotiations for disarmament by the nuclear weapons powers. The Treaty was opened for signature on July 1, 1968, when both the USA and the USSR signed, and entered into force on May 5, 1970. There are 114 parties to the Treaty. It is subject to review at five-year intervals. The last Review Conference 1980 failed to reach agreement on fundamental issues of sharing and safeguards.

Sea-Bed Treaty (1971)

This Treaty prohibits the use of the sea-bed beyond a 12-mile zone for the deployment of nuclear weapons. It does not restrict in any way the use of the seas for facilities to service nuclear submarines and other sea-based nuclear systems. The Treaty thus does not present any major obstacle to the nuclear arms race in the marine environment. The Treaty was signed on February 11, 1971, and came into force on May 18, 1972. There are 70 parties to it.

SALT-I ABM Treaty (1972)

This Treaty imposes limits on specific USA and USSR anti-ballistic missile systems, but it fails to impose restrictions on the development of entirely new systems. The Treaty is a strictly bilateral one, signed on May 26, 1972. It came into force on October 3, 1972.

SALT-I Interim Agreement (1972)

This is also a strictly bilateral agreement between the USA and the USSR, by which the total number of long-range ballistic missile launchers on each side is frozen. It has, however, failed to limit the qualitative development of nuclear weapons, especially the fitting of more than one missile on each launcher. It was signed and came into force on the same date as the SALT-I ABM Treaty.

Threshold Test Ban Treaty (1974)

By this Treaty the USA and the USSR set a 150-kt limit to test explosions. Since most of these are smaller than this limit, it did not produce any substantial change. The Treaty was signed by the two parties on July 3, 1974 but is not yet in force, although both sides are in principle acting in accordance with it. France and China have not adopted the Treaty, but the U.K. has agreed to abide by its terms.

Peaceful Nuclear Explosions Treaty (1976)

This Treaty is a complement to the bilateral Threshold Test Ban Treaty and regulates peaceful nuclear explosions by the USA and the USSR. It was signed on May 28, 1976, but has not yet been ratified.

SALT-II Treaty (1979)

This was a bilateral Treaty between the USA and the USSR which set, for the first time, qualitative as well as quantitative limits. Not only the total of missile launchers but also the number of launchers with multiple warheads (MIRVs) and the number of warheads per missile were limited. Bombers were limited by number and warheads. The fixing of "equal aggregates" facilitated the prospect of balanced and significant reductions in anticipated SALT III negotiations. A Protocol to the Treaty limited the testing and deployment of mobile intercontinental missile launchers and ground- and sea-launched cruise missiles — but that Protocol was scheduled to expire December 31, 1981. The Treaty, however, has relatively small consequences for the actual military programmes of the two sides. The Treaty itself made only slight provision for actual disarmament : only substantial reductions in a follow-on SALT III agreement would save the Treaty from the charge that it did nothing more than to make the nuclear arms race somewhat predictable. The Treaty was signed on June 18, 1979, and is not yet in force because the USA refuses to ratify it, though both signatories continue to abide by its provisions.

* * *

These agreements and treaties have been regarded by some as major achievements in arms control. Others emphasize that they have, generally speaking, failed to stop the arms race. Still others feel that there is an inherent character in present negotiating procedures actually to accelerate the race for new weapons systems. The Hearing Group considered these positive and negative effects.

1. MAJOR WEAKNESSES IN THE PRESENT BILATERAL NEGOTIATING PROCESSES

a. In the prevailing political climate of uncertainty and conflict, negotiations are inevitably slow and complex, and cannot keep up with new developments in weapons technology. Indeed, in some circumstances, new technological developments have been used as bargaining chips to gain an advantage in the negotiating process, resulting in further complications to be resolved.

b. The quantity and quality of the weapons on each side are different and therefore difficult to compare and balance out. How to balance a relatively small but accurate nuclear missile with a big but less accurate one on the other side ? How to measure and compare the vulnerability of different weapons systems, one land-based, one launched from submarines and still others launched from the air ? These inherent asymmetries make achievement of parity (in terms acceptable to both sides) extremely difficult.

c. Although technological advances (e.g. satellite photography, etc.) have improved verification procedures, the increasing complexity of the weapons systems has made the process of verification more complex. Often the instrument of verification itself becomes a target of proposed new weapons systems. In yet other cases these systems may be used as bargaining chips. In this respect verification is a further driving force for developing new weapons which can evade detection.

d. Perhaps the biggest weaknesses in present bilateral negotiations are that the only negotiators are the two major nuclear powers and it is their interests which are primarily served. Under these circumstances, the rest of the world, both nuclear and non-nuclear countries, is suspicious, and rightly so, that the deals made will often be at their expense and they call for multilateral negotiations. The answer of the big powers is that the bilateral process is difficult and complex enough without broadening it and making it more unwieldy.

2. MULTILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS

The situation concerning multilateral negotiations for arms control looks even less promising than for bilateral ones. It might be assumed that the U.N. is the appropriate forum for multilateral negotiations. In practice, those who rejoiced at the unanimous adoption of a programme for general and complete disarmament by the First Special Session of the U.N. General Assembly on Dis-

armament (1978) have been disappointed to observe how the implementation of this programme has been frustrated by lack of big power cooperation.

Plans by the Committee on Disarmament have been consistently vetoed or vitiated by the nuclear powers. The widening of participation in the Committee on Disarmament has so far had no observable impact on the process of negotiations. A witness with long experience in the U.N. work for arms control said to the Hearing that the attitude of the major nuclear powers explains

> " ... the brutal fact that with the exception of the Convention on the prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of bacteriological (biological) and toxin weapons and on their destruction, no multilateral agreements on genuine disarmament measures have been concluded in the period 1962-1981, a period characterized by an incessant and intensified arms race, both quantitatively and qualitatively, both in the conventional and in the nuclear weapons field". (Mrs. Inga Thorsson, Under-Secretary of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sweden)

It is not surprising, therefore, that increasing numbers of people are frustrated with the style as well as the results of these negotiations. As one of the witnesses who has taken part in such negotiations said to the Hearing Group :

> "All in all it seems to me that our arms control efforts of the last years have not passed the test of meeting the principal objectives that are almost universally accepted as being the ones for arms control and disarmament efforts. That is, to reduce the risk of war, to reduce the damage should it occur and to reduce the cost of maintaining the military establishment. I don't believe one can make a very good case that we have made any significant progress on any of these important objectives." (Prof. George Rathjens, Professor of Political Science, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, USA)

3. THE CASE FOR NEGOTIATION

Despite these obvious drawbacks and weaknesses, all the witnesses agreed that in principle the negotiating processes (bilateral and multilateral) must be continued. The reasons are :

a. Conflicts between the major powers themselves and between other power centres remain substantial. Any process of negotiation which helps to resolve tensions may be complex and time-consuming but it should in principle be supported.
b. Such negotiations have in the past contributed to a spirit of *détente* bilaterally and multilaterally, but their progress also depends on a continuation of *détente*. The proposal for a European Disarmament Conference may be commended in this connection.
c. They have helped to place limits on some types of weapons but more important they have contributed to the predictability of the development and deployment of new missile systems, thus eliminating some of the elements of technological surprise of which all are afraid.
d. The dynamics of the negotiating process have resulted in a growing willingness by both sides to share information.

Based on the suggestions of various witnesses the Hearing Group concludes that there are a number of ways by which the negotiating process could be improved. These are :

a. The negotiating process needs a clearer rationale, based perhaps on a comparison of total weapon systems, and clearer indication of the aspects of those systems which seem most threatening to each side and to other parties. The prerequisite would be to assure a wider representation at the negotiating table including other than military interests.
b. Bilateral negotiations are clearly the decisive ones at the moment, but they need to be made more accountable to the interests of the world community. Efforts are needed to make such bodies as the Committee on Disarmament more effective in this regard. This should be a major task of the Second Special Session of the U.N. General Assembly on Disarmament meeting in June 1982.
c. The critique and evaluation of negotiating procedures and their results, made by non-governmental organizations and peace research institutes, need to be more widely known and studied by all concerned. This is one way to ensure more effective public participation in the process of negotiations for peace and disarmament. Only decisive action by an informed public can overcome the present stagnation on negotiations. Mass demonstrations like those in Europe in 1981 have helped significantly to bring the big powers together for new negotiations on nuclear weapons in Europe.

In this connection there is an evident correlation between the failure of arms control negotiations to achieve substantial reductions in the arms race and the fact that more and more of the public support unilateral nuclear disarmament. It was noted at the Hearing that the failure to achieve a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and the non-ratification of SALT II by the United States, had at least had the effect of making the public aware of the shortcomings of official disarmament procedures.

Despite great diversity in economic and political systems and ideological convictions, large segments of the world public are now ready to act, and to put pressure on their governments to become more creative in negotiations and to work harder for nuclear disarmament. The full expression and coordination of this readiness may well become a turning point in humanity's search for a more just and peaceful world.

D. FIRST STEPS TOWARDS NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT

Throughout the Hearing it was reiterated that nuclear weapons pose the greatest danger to humankind and that it is essential to build and reverse the nuclear arms race. Urgent efforts for nuclear disarmament are needed and alternatives to present procedures have to be sought. A number of proposals for first steps towards nuclear disarmament were put to us, of which the most important are given below :

1. NUCLEAR-WEAPON FREE ZONES

"The establishment of a nuclear-weapon free zone on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned constitute an important measure" according to the Programme of Action adopted by the 1978 Special Session of the U.N. General Assembly on Disarmament. The only such regional treaty is the Tlatelolco Treaty already referred to which has not achieved its principal goal since the only countries in the area with any nuclear weapons potential have still not signed it.

In theory by renouncing the acquisition, deployment and use of nuclear weapons in a given region and instituting regional safeguards, a nuclear-free zone agreement could free potentially hostile neighbours from the mutual fear of the acquisition of nuclear weapons by each other.

However a number of conditions have to be fulfilled if nuclear-weapon free zones are to be effective. Within the regions concerned there are substantial political pre-conditions to be met. It may be necessary to resolve important regional political disputes

before any such zone can be established. It must be possible to define the zones and the borders drawn may be artificial. When several possible members of a nuclear-weapon free zone belong to a military alliance which has in its possession nuclear weapons outside the zone, the zone itself loses credibility.

For a nuclear-weapon free zone to be effective the nuclear weapon states have to give undertakings to respect strictly the status of the region and to refrain from the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against the states of the zone. There are no commonly accepted formulae for such guarantees. There is the wider issue of a legally binding international treaty to assure security guarantees to non-nuclear weapon states. There have also to be guarantees that nuclear weapons will not be deployed or transported by air or sea in such zones.

Since fulfilment of these conditions also will help towards disarmament, proposals for nuclear-weapon free zones should be encouraged and supported, despite the difficulties. We wish to add our weight to the strong evidence that a nuclear-free Europe would be welcome in both East and West and endorse the appeal adopted by the Pacific Conference of Churches for a nuclear-free Pacific.

2. PERCENTAGE CUT

This proposal aims at an across-the-board reduction by a certain percentage (one proposal specifies 50%) of the nuclear arsenals now maintained by the USA and the USSR. Such a reduction should affect in equal measure all forms of nuclear weapons — strategic, medium-range and tactical — as well as means to deliver them. Whether or not the balance of reduction was precisely even would not be important. Even after a reduction of 50% there would still be plenty of overkill left on both sides.

It is often pointed out that one limitation of such a proposal is that it does not deal with the question of continued production of newer and better weapons. However any action to reduce the present stockpile of weapons possessed by the USA and the USSR would be an important step towards nuclear disarmament. The proposal for a percentage cut could be made even more significant by linking it with the proposal for a freeze.

3. FREEZE

This proposal calls for a halt in the development, testing, production and deployment of nuclear warheads, and of missiles and aircraft designed to deliver nuclear warheads. It would also apply to improvement in the quality of existing weapons and to related research oriented to new weapons. It is worth recalling that the Central Committee of the WCC in August 1980 urged all nuclear powers to

> "freeze immediately all further testing, production and deployment of nuclear weapons and missiles and new aircraft designed primarily to deliver nuclear weapons".

This proposal can be directly linked to the legal and political obligations of the nuclear-weapon states under the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

In view of the special responsibility of the USA and the USSR, and the rough parity claimed to exist between them, the proposal is usually for bilateral freeze. It has several merits. It would preclude the acquisition of a dangerous new generation of nuclear weapons which are tightening the trigger on nuclear warfare. It would also help to stop the increasing drift towards limited nuclear war. The proposal sets manageable goals and is easily understood by people and can therefore mobilize wide popular support as is already shown in the case of the USA. Its protagonists claim that it is easier to verify a complete stop in the production of all types of nuclear weapons systems than to verify compliance with complicated agreements like SALT which allow for the continued production of a variety of weapons all of which must be monitored.

Objections to the freeze concentrate on an assumed asymmetry between the major powers. The proposal would also freeze the present power relationship that now exists between the Soviet Union and the USA as well as their relationship to the rest of the world. Care would have to be taken, therefore, to prevent such a freeze from hindering work for more just and equitable relations among nations. However, with this proviso, stopping the nuclear arms race between the USA and the USSR would undoubtedly be the single most effective step that could be taken to stop the spread of nuclear weapons to other countries.

4. COMPREHENSIVE TEST BAN

The international community has repeatedly called for the early conclusion of a comprehensive test ban. Successive resolutions of the General Assembly of the United Nations have reflected the view that a test ban should be comprehensive and stop all nuclear tests in all environments for all time.

Since 1977, the United States, the USSR and the United Kingdom have conducted separate negotiations on a test ban treaty. The information provided about these negotiations is, however, not substantive.

A comprehensive test ban could be a most important measure in restraining vertical and horizontal proliferation. By denying opportunities to test new designs for warheads it would create obstacles to qualitative improvement of nuclear warfare systems.

5. INDEPENDENT INITIATIVES AND MEASURES INVITING RECIPROCAL ACTIONS

Another proposal we wish to commend is that of independent disarmament measures (non-negotiated initiatives) which invite a corresponding response, but which do not depend on the uncertainties of protracted negotiations. The main advantage of this proposal is that it could be put into effect immediately and might be instrumental in changing the climate in which future negotiations take place. It also avoids the pertinent criticism that "we can all think of steps which other nations might take".

Such independent measures could include a moratorium on tests, development and deployment of weapons, and withdrawal of arms and contingents of armed forces. There is no nuclear-weapon state which could not make a start either by reducing existing arsenals or by halting announced plans to modernize.

It is important that such independent measures should be presented very clearly as intended to improve the international atmosphere. Invitations to reciprocate should concentrate on areas of mutual interest and opportunities for cooperation. Such measures should be graduated in risk so as to avoid undue dangers during the early period. As Dr. Sydney D. Bailey (Deputy Chairman, Division of International Affairs, Britisch Council of Churches) stated at the Hearing,

> "It would be foolish to assert that unilateral initiatives carry no risks, but negotiated agreements also involve risks, and no agreements at all even greater risks."

E. THIRD WORLD PERSPECTIVES ON PROLIFERATION AND NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT

The Hearing was given forceful presentations of Third World concerns and perspectives on the nuclear arms race and proliferation. There was strong criticism of the policies of the nuclear-

weapon states and a challenge to what was described as conventional wisdom on nuclear weapons. It was pointed out that, particularly in the area of nuclear proliferation, the industrialized world and the nuclear powers have tried far too much to impose their own strategic and political views on Third World nations. There is deep distrust among the latter of the postures of the nuclear-weapon states on deterrence and non-proliferation. The paternalistic and hypocritical manner in which nuclear states deal with these issues has led to cynicism in the Third World. It is therefore all the more important that the Third World should take a more active role in future discussions on nuclear weapons, and that their views should have a greater impact on international policies regarding nuclear disarmament.

Vertical proliferation by the present nuclear-weapon states and horizontal proliferation among hitherto non-nuclear states, are both matters of concern to the whole world.

1. VERTICAL PROLIFERATION

The imminent danger that the world is facing today is due mainly to vertical proliferation. The size of the armories available means that a nuclear war in any part of the world could have disastrous consequences for people everywhere.

Vertical proliferation also has profound political consequences. The reliance of the super-powers on nuclear weapons for their security confers legitimacy on these weapons as instruments of power. In the present state of international power politics, prestige and power are often associated with the possession of nuclear weapons. The nuclear-weapon states are also major actors on the international scene, and do not hesitate to use the political power thus given to them. The implications of this are enormous, and coupled with the notion that a nuclear war can be limited and winnable, provide incentives and motivations for other states to obtain a nuclear capability.

The reliance of the major powers on nuclear weapons for security has also meant that the conflicts among them are often extended to other regions and regional wars, while the nuclear powers themselves avoid direct confrontation. This image of nuclear superiority is also accompanied by the ability to intervene with conventional forces in many parts of the world.

It is often argued that the nuclear arms race between the major powers results in a neglect of the economic needs of the Third World countries. While there is some truth in this argument it can be made with even greater force regarding the conventional arms race. More important, however, is the reinforcement of dominant-dependent relations in the present military alliances through the possession by a few countries of nuclear weapons. These leave very little room for flexibility in international relations, or for any changes in them which would threaten the current security perceptions of the major powers. This stalemate poses serious disadvantage to non-nuclear nations. Their struggles for social and political change are thus often distorted by the security considerations and economic interests of the major powers which tend to be based on maintaining the political *status quo* supported by nuclear deterrence.

2. HORIZONTAL PROLIFERATION

Vertical proliferation is the primary factor undermining the legitimacy and effectiveness of international cooperation in halting the nuclear arms race, but the dangers of horizontal proliferation should not be minimized. Witnesses spoke to us about the nuclear weapon capabilities of many countries including Israel and South Africa. Both of these countries have relationships with their neighbours of a kind which threaten the security of their regions and perhaps of the whole world. Their acquisition of nuclear capability is therefore of grave concern to the international community. It is evident that they have been substantially aided in their clandestine acquisition of nuclear weapons capacity by some Western nations which have violated their international treaty obligations. We strongly condemn all such collaboration.

The assumption by the major powers of the political and strategic utility of nuclear weapons has provided the example for these and other countries and become one of the driving forces for general proliferation.

General technological development as well as the increasing reliance of many countries on nuclear power for the generation of electricity is leading to a rise in the number of countries which have the potential capacity to develop nuclear weapons. Our witnesses made the point that it is difficult to separate the peaceful and military aspects of nuclear energy. The principal method of preventing diversion of nuclear material from peaceful to military uses lies in the safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency. The responsibility of the Agency for such safeguarding is embedded in its own statute and was subsequently extended under the provisions of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. While it is true that no breaches of the safeguards agreements have been reported, there are many open questions about the safety of the IAEA system and some serious reservations about its ability to prevent proliferation in the future. Reliance on technological barriers alone will never give full security and it is essential that they be supplemented by political steps.

Undue restrictions on the transfer of any technology, including nuclear technology, will be resented by Third World nations. We recognize that there are a number of unresolved issues related to the peaceful use of nuclear energy. While generalizations cannot be made about the energy needs of all developing countries, there may be some which have to rely on nuclear energy for industrial needs. Non-proliferation measures should not jeopardize the rights of such states to develop their programmes for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy for economic and social development in conformity with their priorities, interests and needs.

3. THE NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY

The Hearing Group was convinced that a major reason why the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the broader arms limitation and security régime in which it is embedded, do not prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons, is that the Treaty is highly discriminatory in favour of the particular interests of nuclear-weapon states. The preamble and Article VI of the NPT lay down the obligation on the nuclear-weapon states to pursue, in "good faith", negotiations for an early cessation of the nuclear arms race and for disarmament. There has been no single effective disarmament measure since the NPT was signed. On the contrary, the nuclear arms race between the great powers has accelerated and new types of weapons or means of delivery have been or are being introduced, greatly increasing the probability of a nuclear war. The proposals made at the last NPT five-year Review Conference (1980) for strengthening the non-proliferation régime were not accepted by the nuclear-weapon states, and the Conference failed.

Both vertical and horizontal proliferation have to be stopped. But measures for non-proliferation have to begin at the source and centre of nuclear proliferation i.e. nuclear-weapon states. It was pointed out that most of the industrialized states which are part of the two military alliances are in reality nuclear-weapon states. They are members of nuclear planning groups which carry out detailed contingency plans for nuclear war. Many of them permit

the stockpiling of nuclear weapons on their soil and train their troops in the use of nuclear weapons. Some of their industries produce elements of the nuclear weapons systems.

All this only strengthens the case for a credible non-proliferation régime based on equity and reciprocal obligations. The nuclear-weapon states have to take steps to curb their own nuclear arsenals and achieve disarmament measures. The conclusion of a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty would be a step towards limiting both vertical and horizontal proliferation. It would apply to all states and therefore would be non-discriminatory. It would also partially restore the balance of obligations in the NPT.

4. OTHER MEASURES

An issue closely linked to non-proliferation is the regrettable absence of firm international guarantees by the nuclear-weapon states concerning the non-use of nuclear weapons against states which do not possess them. The security assurances so far given by nuclear-weapon states are not legally binding and are too qualified to meet adequately the security needs of non-nuclear states.

Of particular concern to the developing nations is the continued French nuclear testing in the Pacific. The Hearing Group noted the appeal of the Pacific Islanders to the French Government to stop such testing. We strongly endorse this appeal. Third World countries also have an interest in the various disarmament measures proposed above (Section D).

In 1978 and again in 1980, the developing nations moved a resolution in the U.N. General Assembly to the effect that the use and threat of use of nuclear weapons be declared crimes against humanity. In 1978, 103 nations voted in favour and in 1980 the number rose to 112. The non-aligned nations are demanding that nuclear weapons be included in the category of weapons of mass destruction to be banned by a non-discriminatory international convention.

III. BASIC THEOLOGICAL AND ETHICAL ISSUES

In trying to tackle these huge problems from a Christian standpoint, we cannot now enter into the larger debate, as old as Christianity itself, about Christian attitudes to war as such. Christians ought to be peace-makers. War, any war, is an undoubted evil. There is a stark contradiction between the way of love and suffering, which is Christ's way, and the deliberate infliction of suffering and death on others. Yet most Christians in most ages have believed that there are circumstances in which fighting can be the lesser of two evils.

All the theologians who gave evidence to the Hearing were, in their different ways, caught in this dilemma, and none presumed any hope that theology could provide easy answers. The questions posed by nuclear weapons are new. There has been little world discussion from a theological perspective of the issues involved and it is not surprising that there is no consensus. Each spoke against a different political background, and illustrated the extent to which theological and ethical judgements have to be related to the circumstances in which they are formed, and to the practical details of the subject in hand.

Theology does not exist in a vacuum. But neither is it mere commonsense reflection about current affairs. The theologian is all the time aiming to grasp at something more, some new perspective, some new dimension of hope, a further awareness of the breadth and magnitude of the issues at stake, a sense that there are moral constraints within which human beings have to live if they are to retain their humanity. Professor Schillebeeckx, a Roman Catholic theologian from the Netherlands, warned that "the churches should not pretend any kind of ethical superiority; they share the uncertainties of our so-called 'culture'. In spite of this they will have no choice but to speak out in all humility but from within a fundamental, prophetic ethical indignation." That nuclear weapons in some unique way give ground for such indignation was the clear message of our witnesses. It arises from the perception that there are major ethical differences between nuclear weapons and all those which have preceded them.

NUCLEAR AND CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS

This is not the place to describe the horrors of nuclear war. Nor do we pursue here the arguments put to us about the waste of economic resources and the consequent global injustice of nuclear strategies; the same arguments apply, sometimes even more strongly, to the build-up of conventional arms. Waste and horror form the background to what we say, but the first crucial ethical difference, as we understand it, derives from the scale of nuclear devastation, a scale out of all proportion to any reasonable war aim. Warfare on such a scale involves a degree of unpredictability humanity cannot afford to risk.

The second, crucial difference derives from the indiscriminate character of such weapons, entailing as they would a degree and type of destructiveness which could not even in theory be confined to combatants; indeed not only would non-combatants inevitably suffer major casualities wherever such a weapon was used, but much of the biosphere might be devastated as well. The long-term effects of radiation add a further indiscriminate element, comparable to that of biological warfare, which has already been outlawed. Humanity's responsibility under God for his Creation is one of the issues at stake.

To say this is not to claim that a sharp dividing line can in all instances be drawn between nuclear and conventional arms in terms of their immediate results. There are degrees of devastation and degrees of unacceptability even within the limits of conventional warfare. There are those who argue that, in some special circumstances, a very limited use of a few nuclear weapons might be no more unacceptable than a conventional attack. Such a limited use would, however, carry with it unpredictable long-term consequences. The point has already been made in Section II.A.3. that it would be highly dangerous to cross the important psychological threshold between the use of nuclear and non-nuclear weapons. This enormous additional risk of escalation inherent in the use of any nuclear weapon decisively alters the ethical balance. We do not believe therefore that the use of such weapons can ever be considered as ethically equivalent to the use of conventional weapons.

In light of these special characteristics of nuclear weapons, and fully recognizing that there is no Christian consensus on the subject of war as such, we wish to state unequivocally that nuclear warfighting is morally wrong, whatever the circumstances.

Advocates of the strategy of nuclear deterrence, who might endorse this condemnation of nuclear war, argue that the strategy is ethically justifiable precisely because its aim is to prevent war. The ambiguities of the strategy have been discussed earlier in this report. The ethical point at issue is whether the possession of, preparation for the use of, and readiness to use, nuclear weapons fall under the same moral condemnation as their actual use. There is, of course, a profound difference between intentions and deeds, not least in terms of their possible consequences. There is also an element of ambiguity in threats, especially when part of their effectiveness lies in the uncertainty about whether they will actually be carried out. But we cannot escape the conclusion that the readiness to do something wrong shares in the wrongness of the action itself. It would be an exaggeration to claim that the strategy of nuclear deterrence, and the weapons on which it depends, are as unmitigated an evil as an actual nuclear war would be. We believe, however, that they are evil, and that the possession of such weapons and the readiness to use them are wrong in the sight of God and should be treated as such by the churches.

Pragmatic Considerations

The practical consequences of recognizing something as evil may not be immediate or obvious. What may be possible for individuals, and even for churches, may not be possible, or at least not possible in the same way, for Governments and nations. What may be feasible in one set of circumstances may not be feasible in another. The exercise of collective responsibility frequently entails compromises, and politicians are not slow to remind those who

make moral judgements of this kind, that evil cannot be removed merely by condemning it.

It does not follow from this pragmatic estimate of the limits of political action, however, that the adoption of a clear moral stance is politically ineffective. To recognize evil as evil is to set a direction and define an imperative, as well as to do something important in itself. A moral stance can make feasible what was not perceived to be feasible before it was adopted. It changes the climate of opinion. It may give a new sense of urgency to a process, in this instance the process of disarmament, which might otherwise have stagnated, or failed through lack of moral clarity and conviction. It may gradually begin to change political perceptions of what is actually in the long-term interests of the people.

The worldwide condemnation of racism provides a useful parallel. It has neither removed racism nor solved all the problems associated with it. But it has set a standard. In the same way a worldwide denial of the moral legitimacy of nuclear weapons could set the whole disarmament process within a new and more fruitful context.

Christian Responses

Beyond this, the precise way in which the adoption of a moral stance might affect churches and individual Christians would depend upon circumstances. Churches differ as well as nations. Within certain traditions the declaration of a *status confessionis* (article of faith) indicates that an issue has ultimate moral significance. One of our witnesses, Dr. Günter Krusche, a Lutheran theologian from the German Democratic Republic, referred to the Dar es Salaam resolution of the Lutheran World Federation on apartheid as an example of how the *status confessionis* can be an instrument for sharpening the consciousness of Christians; "its intention is not to exclude people from the Kingdom of God, but to point out clearly what is believed to be the Christian way".

In other traditions the growth of a moral consensus may take place in different ways and with different degrees of formality. Whatever the method, though, it is important for Christians to grasp that the issue of nuclear weapons is one which, in its most extreme form, concerns the whole future of life on God's earth. It raises profound questions about the nature of Christian hope and the basis of Christian confidence. It challenges us to consider whether we are faced with a new form of the demonic which is driving humanity to self-destruction.

Some Christians are tempted to react to the size, complexity and threatening character of the problem of nuclear weapons by sinking into a kind of apocalyptic fatalism, as if thoughts of God's judgement on a sinful world were an adequate response to the Gospel message. Others may be tempted into a facile optimism or a despairing resignation in the belief that matters have now passed beyond the powers of human intervention. Others, conscious of the absurdity of a world destroying itself, appear to lose faith in God altogether.

We believe that the authentic Christian response to such threats is to accept our calling to be fellow-workers with Christ in the redemption of the world from evil. Our mandate is, to go on praying, believing, working and hoping, no matter how daunting the task.

Part of the task must be to keep the whole issue within a broad perspective and to relate it to long-term goals. We have pointed out, more than once, in the previous section, the inseparability of peace and justice. In our earlier discussion of deterrence, we made the point that security is a global concept, and that there can be no ultimate security for any without security for all. We draw attention now to the fact that, just as particular strategic questions need to be studied critically in the light of a broad concept of security, so the concept of security itself needs to be studied critically in the light of the Gospel. There can be blind, selfish, and ultimately self-defeating, security aims, just as there can be narrowly conceived, and ultimately destabilizing, strategies. An ultimate reliance on nuclear weapons as the guarantee of security could become a new form of idolatry.

In the maintainance of such a broad perspective, Christians need each other, since none of us can remain unprejudiced in the assessment of our own goals. We end this section, therefore, by reminding the WCC of its own unique role and responsibility as a worldwide fellowship of Christians in which, on the basis of mutual acceptance, all can have the benefit of radical criticism from other perspectives and cultures.

Further Study

Part of that role and responsibility is to press ahead with deeper reflection on the theological and moral issues raised by nuclear arms. As a result of the questions raised during the course of the Hearing, we are convinced that the whole Church and especially the world theological community has a responsibility to continue urgent study of these matters, in particular such issues as the following :

1. If twentieth century concepts of total war have rendered much traditional thinking about Just War doctrine obsolete, is it nevertheless still justifiable to condemn some forms of warfare as disproportionate and indiscriminate ? In the event of escalation to nuclear war what would be the moral difference between first strike and retaliation ? What are the theological and moral grounds for such judgements ?
2. Christian attitudes to war have in the past developed in the context of conventional warfare. The development of nuclear weapons has started a process of reformulation of Christian attitudes and approaches to war and pacifism. Can Christians take a position of "nuclear pacifism" and still justify conventional warfare ?

IV. URGENT TASKS FOR THE CHURCHES

The testimony of many experts and their vivid descriptions of the potential effects of present-day nuclear arsenals reinforce our conviction that nuclear war would mean the end of civilization as we know it. Yet, ever larger and more sophisticated stockpiles of weapons are demanded in order to maintain the balance of military power. We have also learnt that in some countries, despite all evidence about the consequences of any use of nuclear weapons, military strategists think in terms of nuclear exchanges based on the tacit assumption either that nuclear war is winnable through a surprise first strike or that limited nuclear wars are possible through the use of relatively small nuclear weapons.

In this situation of great danger, of uncertainty and confusion about political and moral obligations, it is our conviction that the churches have a great responsibility to serve the interests of all peoples along the following lines :

1. We believe that the time has come when the churches must unequivocally declare that the production and deployment as well as the use of nuclear weapons are a crime against humanity and that such activities must be condemned on ethical and theological grounds. The nuclear weapons issue is, in its import and threat to humanity, a question of Christian discipline and faithfulness to the Gospel. We recognize that nuclear weapons will not disappear because of such an affirmation by the churches. But it will involve the churches and their members in a fundamental examination of their own implicit or explicit support of policies which, implicitly explicitly, are based on the possession and use of these weapons. Further, the churches must become involved in whatever ways are appropriate in active and effective programmes for disarmament.

2. We realize that this places a special responsibility on Christians and churches in those countries which possess nuclear weapons and especially on churches in the two major powers, the USA and the USSR. These countries and their allies bear a heavy burden of responsibility for the nuclear arms race and nuclear weapons proliferation. The rest of the world Christian community has a right to expect that Christians in these countries will be active in challenging present nuclear arms policies. We take into account, of course, the different situations of the churches in these countries.

3. Recognizing that the present state of confrontation between nations reduces the possibility of effective disarmament, the churches must give the highest priority to efforts to create confidence and understanding between nations and peoples all over the world by a more constructive use of their international links with one another. They must also develop and support measures to overcome widespread cynicism, despair and indifference and expose narrow nationalistic thinking.

4. Many people, including many Christians, are in danger of being paralyzed by the immensity and complexity of the problems. Churches can help to clarify the issues in a way which combines moral urgency with political understanding, and so to create a new climate of opinion. This should be done not only for their own members but also for the public at large, including decision-makers in political and military circles. We ask churches to think through the implications of these issues for their educational programmes.

5. Increasing popular resistance to nuclear weapons in many countries, both East and West, is creating a political climate in which the issues of disarmament and arms control have become matters of central concern. Some movements include wider consideration about the relationship between disarmament and development. We support such movements, both as expressions of effective participation by large numbers of people in matters of vital importance to them, and as opportunities for popular education about peace, justice and security. We have received striking evidence of the effectiveness of some of these movements particularly those in which the tradition of education extends over many years, and we urge Churches and Christian individuals, where appropriate, to play a responsible part within them.

6. The churches have a particular responsibility to remind public opinion of the close links between disarmament and development policies, and associate the efforts for disarmament with the wider issues of justice, nationally and globally.

7. We cannot here make detailed proposals for the specific actions of the churches in particular countries. However, in light of the principles enunciated above and in view of the suggestions received at the Hearing we urge consideration of the following proposals :

a. Encourage the spread of information to remove the myths surrounding, and to challenge the legitimacy of, nuclear weapons and the driving forces behind the arms race.
b. Help political, military and scientific workers to understand the moral implications of what they are doing.
c. Explore ways of cooperating with other organizations and movements in the field of peace and disarmament and co-operate with peoples of other faiths.
d. Support the victims of weapons testing, development and production. This will involve acts of international solidarity, e.g. by support for the campaign of the Pacific Islands for an end to nuclear testing. Work on such specific concerns could also help to strengthen political determination to achieve a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

APPENDIX

I. MEMBERS OF THE HEARING GROUP

THE RT. REV. JOHN S. HABGOOD (U.K.) **Moderator**
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(Note : Prof. Warwick E. Kerr, Professor of Genetics, Federal University of Maranhâo, Brazil and former President, Brazilian Congress of Scientists, was invited to be a member of the Hearing Group but was unable to secure permission to take part.)

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